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NORDIC STATEMENT ON SOUTH AFRICA

[Note: This issue contains the text of a statement released at the conclusion of a meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Nordic countries held at Karlshamn, Sweden, on 22 and 23 March 1991.]

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NORDIC STATEMENT ON SOUTH AFRICA

1. The Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Nordic countries note with satisfaction that progress has continued in South Africa since the last meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Nordic countries, held on 11 and 12 September 1990. The Ministers particularly welcome President de Klerk's undertaking that he would propose in the current parliamentary session the abolition of the laws on which apartheid is based.

2. The Ministers are pleased to observe that the South African Government has now taken significant concrete steps to realize President de Klerk's promises in the form of the legislative proposals that were presented recently. The Nordic Foreign Ministers are looking forward to the implementation of the final decisive legislative steps towards a society that would be freed from apartheid.

3. It is encouraging that additional agreements have been entered into between the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC) and the South African Government regarding the resumption of the release of political prisoners and the repatriation of refugees in exile. The constructive spirit that characterized the first meeting between the leaders of ANC and the Inkatha Freedom Party is a further encouraging feature. The Ministers note with satisfaction the ANC proposals for an all-party congress on the fundamental principles for negotiations on a democratic constitution.

4. At the same time, the brutal and meaningless violence that has caused thousands of deaths over a number of years, which is still continuing, is a highly disturbing feature of developments in South Africa. The South African Government has a special responsibility for ensuring that violence is rapidly brought to an end. The Ministers also appeal to the ANC and Inkatha leaders to continue to make every effort to ensure that talks about the future South Africa can take place in a peaceful and constructive atmosphere.

5. The Ministers note that, since 1978, the Nordic countries have been making joint endeavours to contribute to the total abolition of apartheid by peaceful means.

6. In the Nordic Programme on South Africa adopted at their meeting at Molde in September 1990, the Foreign Ministers established that, in the light of developments in South Africa, they wished to evaluate continuously and consider adjustments of Nordic measures regarding South Africa.

7. Against that background, the Foreign Ministers discussed how the Nordic countries can best support and expedite the dialogue in South Africa and the process of negotiation.

8. The Foreign Ministers note that, in the light of the developments outlined above, the time is approaching when the economic sanctions applied by the Nordic countries against South Africa must be re-examined. Actual developments in South Africa are the decisive factor in any possible relaxation of sanctions policies.

9. The Foreign Ministers agree that the abolition of the apartheid system, which is based on legislative measures, will be a turning point in the development of South Africa that will make it possible for the Nordic countries to revoke economic sanctions on the basis of a comprehensive political assessment of the situation.

10. However, the encouraging changes that are taking place in South Africa already justify additional steps on the part of the Nordic countries to promote dialogue and the process of democratization. In the current situation, the Ministers are convinced that broader contacts between the Nordic countries and South Africa will benefit this endeavour. The Nordic countries have, therefore, decided to abolish the special guidelines applicable to the granting of visas to South African citizens, with the exception of restrictions that are required to ensure the implementation of nationally applicable sanctions.

11. The Ministers also confirm their intention to support efforts in South Africa to reduce economic differences and to promote democracy following the abolition of the apartheid system.

12. The Nordic Foreign Ministers declare their strong hope that the Government of South Africa will now implement its policy of reform so that genuine and meaningful negotiations on a new, democratic constitution can start as soon as possible. It is, therefore, desirable that the South African parliament fulfil President de Klerk's undertaking to abolish the apartheid laws, and that the Government of South Africa remove all the remaining obstacles to negotiations on a new constitution for South Africa as soon as possible.

READEX FICHE

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